

The Inscrutable Question: The First Thing God Did for Us Was to Bless Us: Escrow Precedes Election; Election Is Not the Cause of Salvation, Eph 1:3-4

Ephesians 1:3 - Worthy of praise is God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.

14. All the elements of an escrow are found in this verse:
- God has blessed us thus He is the First Party or the Grantor.
 - The words “has blessed” refer to the action taken by God in creating the escrow contract.
 - The pronoun “us” refers to believers who are the Third Party or Grantees. They are identified in:

Ephesians 1:1 - Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus and especially to the faithful in Christ Jesus.

- This introduction identifies those who are meant by the pronoun “us” in verse 3: (1) Paul, (2) believers at Ephesus and other churches in Asia Minor, and (3) believers in Jesus Christ who are faithful.
- The contents of the escrow Deposit are noted in general terms by the phrase “every spiritual blessing.”
- The Depository, or the place where the escrow’s deposit is kept, is said to be “in heavenly places.”
- The Third Party, called the Depository or Escrow Officer, is identified as Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 1:3 - Worthy of praise is God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who [as First Party or Grantor] has blessed [creation of the escrow] us [believers, the Second Party or Grantees] with every spiritual blessing [the contents of the escrow] in heavenly places [the Depository] in Christ [the Third Party, Escrow Officer or Depository],

15. Verse 4 reveals to us precisely when this escrow contract was put on deposit in heaven under the supervision of Jesus Christ as Escrow Officer.

Ephesians 1:4 - since He Himself has elected [main verb] us in Him before the beginning of the world [creation, Genesis 1:1] that we should be holy and blameless in His presence.

16. In verse 3 the phrase “has blessed” is the aorist active participle of the verb:

εὐλογέω, eulogeo - the creation of the escrow account

aorist: Culminative; views the escrow deposit in its entirety but regards it from the standpoint of its existing results. They are on deposit awaiting fulfillment in time by the mature believer.

active: God produces the action as Grantor.

participle: Circumstantial; expresses attendant circumstances, i.e., the volitional decisions of the believer related to fulfillment of the Escrow Agreement.

17. A question arises: When did God the Father as Grantor actually create the escrow and place it on deposit with Christ as Trustee? The verb **εὐλογέω, eulogeo**, “has blessed,” is an aorist active participle. And the action of an aorist participle always precedes the action of the main verb.
18. What then is the action of the aorist participle? It is the creation of the escrow account and placing it on deposit in heaven.
19. We will learn when this occurred if we can learn when the action of the main verb occurred. First what is the main verb? It is the one that is in the indicative mood and that sends us to verse 4 and the aorist middle indicative of the verb:

ἐκλέγω, eklego - “He Himself has elected us”

aorist: Culminative; contemplates the action of the verb in its entirety and regards it from the viewpoint of existing results. Those who are determined by omniscience to believe in Christ are the elect.

middle: Direct; it refers the action of the verb directly to the subject with reflexive force: “He Himself has elected us.”

indicative: Declarative; a dogmatic statement of doctrinal fact.

20. The English word “election” translates the Greek verb **ἐκλέγω, eklego** but in the middle voice it means literally: “to choose something for oneself,” or “to make one’s choice” (*TDNT*, 4:144). More precisely we note:

The Analytical Greek Lexicon. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), 125:

ἐκλέγω, [In the middle voice] *to choose out* as the recipients of special favor and privilege. [Noun form] *election* to privilege by divine grace.

21. An important distinction needs to be made between our election and our salvation. An excellent synopsis is provided by:

Thieme, R. B., Jr. *The Divine Outline of History: Dispensations and the Church*. 2d ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1999), 106:

God elected for salvation every human being who would ever believe in Jesus Christ. **Election is not the cause of salvation.** Instead, God sovereignly chose to accomplish all the work for man’s salvation and to institute nonmeritorious faith in Jesus Christ as the sole remaining criterion for obtaining salvation. Because divine omniscience is not limited by time, God knew in eternity past who would believe in Christ and in eternity past chose each believer to be the recipient of eternal salvation. In other words, He chose to make salvation a reality in the soul of anyone who actually would believe in Christ. Therefore, every believer of every dispensation can be described as elect in regard to salvation.

22. Election is God’s choice of those whom He, in His sovereign will, determined to save. Omniscience perceived the reality of each person in human history who would believe “before the foundation of the world.”

Ephesians 1:4 - since He Himself has elected [**main verb**] us in Him before the beginning of the world [**Genesis 1:1**] that we should be holy and blameless in His presence.

23. Consequently, every person in human history who has responded to the “sole remaining criterion” for “obtaining salvation,” namely “to believe in Jesus Christ,” was known to God in eternity past at which time He elected that person to “special favor and privilege by divine grace.”

